METHOD FOR TESTING BROWSER-ADAPTING SERVER APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present invention relates to a method for testing browser-adapting server applications, as set forth in the preamble of claim 1.

[0002] One of the most important application areas of the Internet, or, generally, of networked environments, is the distribution of information. In this context, "information" is generally understood to be data which is made available to one or a plurality of users. This information is usually linked to a fixed environment, such as Email, Word Wide Web, FTP, or even independent programs, which can be used to retrieve this information. The linkage between the information and its environment very often determines the format of the information. For example, information in the World Wide Web is available as HTML, information that can be loaded using FTP (texts, programs, etc.) is in an arbitrary format, and information from information systems, such as are frequently found in Intranet applications, is in a format specifically defined for this environment only.

[0003] Therefore, the information provided, for example, on World Wide Web (WWW) and Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) servers, is often adapted to the capabilities of the requesting browser. To this end, these servers, or applications accessible via these servers, needs to maintain databases providing information about the capabilities of each individual browser. Due to the nearly unimaginable number of browsers in use throughout the world, the effort required for updating the databases is not to be underestimated. When requesting data from a server, every browser sends so-called "key information" to the server; the key information characterizing the browser. This key information includes, for example, information about the kind, type and current version of the browser, the natural languages supported by the browser, the supported file and graphics formats, etc.

[0004] When a new browser appears on the national or international market, it must be added to the database together with information about its capabilities, after which the browser-adapting server application must be tested for its adaptation method. If the adaptation method needs to be modified, a test must be performed for the browsers already previously supported by the browser-adapting server application in order to ensure that the modifications made to the adaptation method do not affect the previously supported browsers. Depending on, for

example, the number of browsers already supported and the number of functions implemented in a server application, this can result in a considerable testing effort. This testing effort can cause considerable delays in supporting newly appeared browsers, depending on the availability of resources. Prompt updating of the server application is only possible with extensive use of resources. The procurement of the new browsers to be able to subsequently use them for local testing may result in further delay. A suitable test environment must be provided for each kind of browser.

[0005] It is the object of the present invention to provide a method by which adaptation methods for adapting information-providing server applications to the capabilities of information-requesting browsers can be tested with little effort so as to minimize the testing effort for browser-adapting server applications.

[0006] This objective is achieved according to the present invention by the features of Claim 1.

[0007] Advantageous embodiments and refinements of the present invention are specified in the dependent claims.

[0008] The method for simplified testing of browser-adapting server applications is based on the use of key information recorded by other server applications (not further described herein) about as large as possible a number of different browser types and versions, and on using this key information for testing information adaptation methods. In the process, the key information of each individual browser type and of each individual browser version is transmitted to a browser-adapting server application. The information returned by the server application can subsequently be compared, for example, to the information that was supplied, for example, before the adaptation method was modified.

[0009] The present invention takes advantage of the fact that adaptation methods for browser-adapting server applications are based on the evaluation of information that can be directly or indirectly obtained about an information-requesting browser. However, the key to this information is always exactly the information that the information-requesting browser transfers directly to the server application. This information, here referred to as "key

information", can be used to obtain further information about a browser. For this purpose, a database can be used which keeps this indirect information available for a server application.

[0010] It is irrelevant to the adaptation method whether this key information is transmitted directly by the browser to which this key information belongs, or whether this key information is transmitted by a different information source. When the key information from different information sources is identical, the adaptation method cannot distinguish the information sources.

[0011] Therefore, given the availability of the key information, information adaptation methods can be tested without directly using the browser.